

Kennedy Gets New Proposal to Merge Military Intelligence

By David Wise

HYANNIS PORT, Mass., July 3.—President Kennedy has received a recommendation that all military intelligence-gathering be merged into a single new agency similar to the civilian Central Intelligence Agency, it was learned today.

The proposal would mean elimination of often-conflicting estimates of the three armed services intelligence branches.

The recommendation was one of the chief proposals in Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor's oral report to Mr. Kennedy on overhauling the nation's intelligence network.

Creation of a single military intelligence agency in the Pentagon also has been under consideration by another study panel, headed by Dr. James R. Killian, Jr., chairman of the board of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Taylor on Panel

Gen. Taylor is also a member of the Killian panel. The former Army Chief of Staff was named by Mr. Kennedy to study the intelligence apparatus in the wake of the unsuccessful invasion of Cuba by C. I. A.-trained exiles.

The proposal to eliminate the individual Army, Navy and Air Force intelligence branches and merge them into a single new agency was learned as Dr. Killian conferred for forty-five minutes with Mr. Kennedy here.

Dr. Killian flew to Hyannis from Boston and then left immediately after his conference. He did not talk to newsmen.

Near A Decision

As the New York Herald Tribune reported yesterday, the President is rapidly nearing a decision on how to streamline and reorganize the nation's cloak-and-dagger apparatus. Some indication that he likes Gen. Taylor's proposals in this area was provided by the fact that the President last week named him as his White House military adviser.

Gen. Taylor's recommendation for a single Pentagon intelligence agency, however, can be expected to engender strong opposition by the services which like to preserve their separate identity wherever possible. And each service has strong supporters in Congress who could turn on political heat against the proposed merger.

Eye C. I. A. Changes

The President is also considering a proposal to merge the intelligence-gathering functions of C. I. A. and the intelligence and research branch of the State Department into a new agency related to the State Department along the same lines as the United States Information Agency. At present the State Department has control over the C. I. A.

Should the merger proposal be accepted and carried out, the result would be consolidation of United States espionage, intelligence and counter-intelligence work into two new agencies, one military and one civilian.

It would not, however, solve the problem of what to do about covert, semi-military intelligence operations such as the Cuban invasion. At present, these are carried out by the C. I. A., but the Killian group has considered stripping C. I. A. of this function.

Would Isolate Operations

Critics of the present system contend that the same agency should not gather intelligence and carry out operational activities. The theory is that those who favor a particular operation might distort their evaluations of intelligence reports to fit the particular operational project.

Underlying the proposal for a single Pentagon intelligence agency is the fact that when estimates reach the President's desk, they often contain dissenting opinions by one or more of the armed service intelligence branches.

In effect, this forces the President to interpret and evaluate, a task which Gen. Taylor apparently believes should best be left to the boss of the merged intelligence agency, who would be an expert.

Study Crisis Center

The single Pentagon agency would attempt, where possible, to come up with a consensus, a single recommendation to the President in a given situation.

At one point, those studying the system for the President considered shifting the intelligence and research divisions of the State Department into the "Crisis Center," headed by Gen. C. Ashleson, whom Kennedy named as his military adviser. However, this idea was now discarded, since it was felt that the intelligence and research functions had no real relationship to Mr. Ashleson's duties. It appeared that a new agency was in the air.

May Get New Name

However, the intelligence and research section of the State Department may be given a new and less obvious title even if it is not merged with C. I. A. into a single civilian agency.

Dr. Killian's panel, known as the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, was established five years ago but reshuffled by Mr. Kennedy after Cuba. It is a continuing board with over-all intelligence supervisory functions. Gen. Taylor's survey was short-range. He reported orally, rather than on paper, presumably to increase the tight security surrounding his study.

The President's brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, was also named to work with Gen. Taylor on the survey. Robert Kennedy is here spending the July 4 week end with the President.